

GAA SOCIAL INITIATIVE NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2010 – ISSUE 1



INTRODUCTION



This is the first Newsletter of the GAA Social Initiative and the intention is to issue it on a monthly basis for the first six months, after which a decision on its optimum frequency will be taken.

A letter sent out after the October Seminar, asked clubs participating in the Initiative to send on by December 1, details of planned social events and reports of any activities undertaken to date.

A number of such reports are still awaited and your co-operation would be greatly appreciated as it is known that a number of clubs have events planned in the near future and if notified, the Social Initiative Project Manager will make every effort to attend such events. In addition Uachtarán CLG, Criostóir Ó Cuana is keen to attend a number of events if advance notification is received.



CLUB EVENTS

Great progress has been made in a number of clubs already and for other participating clubs the following examples may be useful:

- a) **Glynn-Barntown (Wexford)** - A very successful social evening was organised by the Glynn-Barntown club in Wexford on November 13. In celebrating its 125 year history, the club joined in with the neighbouring

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Taghmon Camross club to bring approximately 90 men together for a most enjoyable evening of storytelling, music and singing.

- b) **Spa/Temploe/Glenbeigh/Renard (Kerry)** - The four Kerry clubs participating in the Initiative combined to organise an outing that involved 78 men being brought on a morning visit to Crag Caves (Castleisland). This was followed by a meal in Killarney. At this stage, the group was joined in the Hotel by another community group (sean-cáirde) that included a large number of ladies, thereby facilitating a music and dancing session. In all, approximately 300 people were finally involved.
- c) **Eadestown (Kildare)** - On December 2, the Eadestown club were to hold a Golden Jubilee celebration for the club team of 1960 in Lawlors Hotel, Naas. Unfortunately, this was postponed because of the weather.
- d) **Raparees/Starlights (Wexford)** - On December 12, the Raparees/Starlights club were to organise a function for all the older members of the club who contributed to its development over the years. This also had to be postponed until the New Year.
- e) **Lucan Sarsfields** - President Mary McAleese will visit the club on January 19 to perform a number of functions and included in the programme of events will be a meeting with Social Initiative participants.
- f) **St. Brigid's (Roscommon)** - St Brigid's will launch its programme on 17th December in the clubhouse to coincide with a club fund-raiser.

Please note that most clubs contacted have decided to organise an event around the Christmas period and it is recommended that all clubs aim to have their first event organised by 1 January at the latest (or shortly thereafter where weather has interfered with plans) in order to get the Initiative off the ground and maintain momentum.

LIST OF SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES/EVENTS

A list of suggested events/activities was issued after the Seminar that the Initiative clubs might consider. This was based on a combination of the Project Manager's input and those ideas that the clubs submitted at the Seminar/Workshop in October. Two of those suggestions have been pursued as follows:

- a) **Croke Park Tour** - The Museum Director has agreed a special deal that includes a tour of the museum/stadium followed by a lunch provided by Fitzers in either the museum restaurant or in one of the Level 6 Corporate boxes. See attachment for details.

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- b) **Attending Matches** - The Ticket Office Manager has agreed to extend OAP prices to tour groups associated with the Social Initiative. The following normal restrictions apply:
- The tickets will normally be for the Lower Davin or Lower Cusack Stands and in designated areas.
 - The games do not include All-Ireland Finals and are subject to availability.
 - Club representatives will communicate directly with the ticket office on administrative details.

Please note that it is suggested that clubs consider the All-Ireland Club Final and National League Final days as ideal opportunities for Initiative clubs to attend Croke Park in a comfortable setting.

PARTNERSHIPS

Contact has been made with a number of potential partners over the past few weeks and clubs should consider how these might be pursued to mutual advantage at local level:

- 'Active Retirement'** - there are 509 'Active Retirement' Associations around the country and the CEO, Maureen Kavanagh, believes a mutually-beneficial relationship can be forged at all levels (**see Attachment for is a short message from her**). It is the intention to establish three Pilot Partnerships as a start and, in fact, in the case of Ballinasloe, the first steps have been taken to develop such a partnership already. However, these partnerships will only happen with the agreement of both parties at local level and with a view to supporting each other – not competing. In addition, the core objectives of the Initiative should be kept in mind at all times.
- 'Age & Opportunity' - (Go for Life)** - Go for Life' is the national programme for physical activity for older people. It is an Age & Opportunity initiative funded by the Irish Sports Council. Physical activity is a great way to break the ice with a group of people who don't know each other, particularly if the focus is on fun rather than fitness. 'Go for Life' has a network of over 1000 Physical Activity Leaders (PALs), involved in older peoples' groups all over the country, who are leading and organising physical activities with their own groups and can act as a great local resource. If you wish to make contact with the PALs in your area you can ring the Go for Life office at **01-8057733**.
- Pobal** - The Project Manager held a meeting with the CEO of Pobal, Denis Leamy, some time ago and, at his suggestion, subsequently met the Chairman of the Rural Transport Programme (RTP), Jack Roche, and the Director of the Irish Local Development Network (ILDN), Brian Carty. The RTP offers a potential option in respect of transport arrangements for Initiative activities and contact should be made with your local operator to investigate the possibilities available at local level

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(see attachment). The ILDN - traditionally known as the 'Leader' programme - has the resources to provide support for club activities and this should be pursued also at local level (for further information, see www.ildn.ie).

Please note reports from clubs on the outcome of any such discussions should be sent to the Project Manager to pass on to other clubs. Any material for further meetings with Jack Roche and Brian Carty would also be appreciated.

- d) **Garda Síochana** - The Project Manager spoke to the Head of the Garda Community Relations office and she is going to inform her staff of the clubs participating in the Social Initiative. Therefore, should you wish to make contact at club level with the local Community Relations Officer, please feel free to do so in the knowledge that they are anticipating and will welcome contact.
- e) **Northern Ireland** - The Ulster Representative, Ryan Feeney, is in the process of establishing similar contact with potential partners in Northern Ireland and information received will be disseminated over time.

HISTORY PROJECTS

You will be aware that there is a GAA Oral History project in progress at present and contact was made with Mike Cronin, the Project Director. He has suggested the following options for any club interested in conducting a local or club history project:

- a) If a club wishes Social Initiative participants to be interviewed, he is willing to do this where his scheduling allows. Alternatively, he can train local volunteers to undertake the interviews and provide them with necessary know-how and equipment.
- b) There is a set questionnaire available (on his website at www.gaahistory.com) and these can be accessed and used locally by Initiative participants and volunteers.
- c) A special session can be organised where Initiative participants are gathered together for discussion groups which can be recorded as either sound or vision. Press cuttings, photograph albums etc, can be used to spark memories. He is willing to deploy a team to assist a club undertaking such a project. Mike Cronin can be contacted at info@gaahistory.com or 01 662 5055.

WEBSITE

The website is up and running and we are in the process of adding a Discussion Forum that will offer the clubs the opportunity to forward reports of activities and submit ideas, etc. All contributions by clubs will be consolidated and re-issued by the Social Initiative office. Please also forward any

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suggestions you have for the website itself. It is still just a first effort and ideas on how it could be improved will be welcome.

You can visit the GAA Social Initiative website at www.gaa.ie/socialinitiative.

DOCUMENTATION

It is important that you maintain simple records of your activities relating to the Initiative in order to inform a review that will take place next year to assess the future of the Initiative. Ideally, these should be forwarded to the Project Manager's office on an ongoing basis or, alternatively, in consolidated form in September 2011.

PUBLICITY

One of the main objectives of the Initiative is to expand the number of participating clubs to 5-10 per county by the end of 2011. The most effective way to persuade other clubs to get involved will be their observation of your activities. Therefore, you are asked to actively seek publicity for all your events in the local media. If you need any assistance in this regard please contact the Project Manager.

CONCLUSION

Thank you all once again for participating in the Initiative. In conclusion, good luck to all in organising Initiative events and activities over the coming year and, of course, a Happy and Peaceful Christmas.

For further information please contact:

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